

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12  
DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /061 W  
-----110608 232231Z /66  
R 231730Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9366

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 0505

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MPOL, MASS, MORG, PGOV, PERP, JM, US  
SUBJECT: JAMAICAN-AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS

REFERENCE: 77 STATE 306726

1. THE JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE (JDF), WHILE SMALL, IS A KEY ELEMENT IN JAMAICA'S INTERNAL SECURITY STRUCTURE. IT HAS IN THE PAST ENJOYED A REPUTATION FOR AVOIDING INVOLVEMENT IN JAMAICA'S OFTEN TURBULENT POLITICS. HOWEVER, THERE RECENTLY HAVE BEEN PERIODIC AND INCREASING -- SIGNS OF A PREDISPOSITION ON THE PART OF SOME OF THE JDF'S OFFICER'S TO IDENTIFY ACTIVELY THEMSELVES WITH EITHER THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY OR THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY. TO DATE, THE JDF HAS LOOKED LARGELY TO THE BRITISH FOR TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT. THIS RESULTS IN LARGE MEASURE FROM TRADITION BUT ALSO REFLECTS SOMEWHAT EASIER ACCESS. HOWEVER, OVER RECENT YEARS THE JDF ALSO HAS OBTAINED SIX AIRCRAFT, FOUR COASTAL PATROL CRAFT, TEN ARMORED CARS AND A VARIETY OF SMALL ITEMS THROUGH COMMERCIAL U.S. SOURCES.

2. WITH REGARD TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN THE REFTEL, OUR ANSWERS ARE SET FORTH IN THE SAME ORDER:

A. OUR TIES TO THE JDF ARE NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT BUT THEY ARE USEFUL  
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AND SUPPORTIVE. THEY OFFER ADDITIONAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION REGARDING JAMAICA'S SECURITY SITUATION AND, TO A SIGNIFICANTLY LESSER DEGREE, THE STATE OF PLAY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, WERE WE TO BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE MILITARY, OUR LOSS WOULD NOT BE IRREMIABLE. SINCE THE MILITARY ARE, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, APOLITICAL, GOOD TIES WITH THE JDF ARE NOT CENTRAL TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH

THE GOVERNMENT.

WE PRESENTLY SEE NO SUBSTANTIAL WAY IN WHICH EFFECTIVE TIES WITH THE JAMAICAN MILITARY SERVE(OR THEIR DISAPPEARANCE WOULD THREATEN) ANY VITAL SECURITY INTEREST. ON THE OTHER HAND, INSOFAR AS THE SECURITY OF AMERICANS IN JAMAICA IS CONCERNED, GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE JDF ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND WE THEREFORE ASSIGN CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO THEM.

B. FORMAL LINKS TO THE JDF BY THE AMERICAN MILITARY ARE MAINTAINED BY OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE. OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS MISSION AT A VARIETY OF LEVELS ALSO ENJOY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE JDF. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT ASSIGNS IMPORTANCE TO THE JDF'S RELATIONS WITH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE FOR THEY KEEP OPEN ACCESS TO AMERICAN MATERIEL AND TECHNOLOGY. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT, IF ANY, IMPORTANCE THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT ASSIGNS TO THE LINKS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL MISSION MEMBERS AND THEIR CONTACTS IN THE JDF.

C. THE JDF IS ANXIOUS TO INSURE THAT IT MAINTAINS ITS ABILITY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. TO THIS END, IT PERIODICALLY REQUIRES NEW EQUIPMENT. (ALL BUT THE MOST RUDIMENTARY ITEMS MUST BE IMPORTED.) HOWEVER, GIVEN JAMAICA'S PARLOUS FOREIGN EXCHANGE SITUATION, THE JDF CONFRONTS STRINGENT CONSTRAINTS IN ITS ABILITY TO OBTAIN THE FUNDS REQUIRED TO MAKE WHAT IT DEEMS TO BE NEEDED PURCHASES  
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ABROAD. SIMILARLY, THE JDF WOULD BENEFIT WERE ITS OFFICERS AND MEN ABLE TO OBTAIN MORE TRAINING ABROAD BUT THIS, TOO, IS CIRCUMSCRIBED BY FOREIGN EXCHANGE STRINGENCIES. IN THE ABSENCE OF GRANTS TO ASSIST THE JDF TO ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT AND/OR TRAINING, WE MUST RELY ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9367

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 0505

OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE WITH THE JDF, AND  
ALSO SUCH OTHER LINKS AS MAY EXIST FROM  
TIME TO TIME, TO SERVE OUR MUTUAL NEEDS.

D. A REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF ARMS SALES  
BY THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT MATERIALLY  
AFFECT THE PRESENT SITUATION SINCE THE  
PURCHASES BY THE JAMAICANS OF AMERICAN  
EQUIPMENT ARE LIMITED AND EQUIVALENT  
EQUIPMENT CAN BE OBTAINED ELSEWHERE.  
HOWEVER, WE SEE LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY  
OFFERING THE KINGS OF SUPPORT AND ADVICE  
DESCRIBED IN REFTEL. FOR ONE REASON,  
THE SIZE OF THE JDF MAKES MUCH OF THE  
KINDS OF SUPPORT AND ADVICE WE MIGHT OFFER  
UNNECESSARY. FOR A SECOND, THE JAMAICANS  
WILL BE LITTLE INCLINED TO ACCEPT OUR  
ADVICE REGARDING ARMS AND EQUIPMENT THEY  
HAVE PURCHASED FROM A THIRD-COUNTRY SOURCE  
WITH HARD-WON FOREIGN EXCHANGE. THE CASE  
OF SUPPORT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT, BUT WE SEE  
LITTLE PROFIT IN FOLLOWING SUCH A COURSE.

E. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS  
COULD PLAY THE CENTRAL ROLE IN MAIN-  
TAINING AND STRENGTHENING TIES WITH  
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THE JAMAICA MILITARY. SUCH EXCHANGES  
SHOULD CENTER ON PROVISION OF TRAINING  
TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, THERE  
IS AGAIN THE PROBLEM OF FINANCIAL  
CONSTRAINTS.

THE JAMAICANS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE OPEN-  
INGS AVAILABLE AT THE SERVICE ACADE-  
MIES AND OF TRAINING COURSE IN WHICH  
THEY CAN PARTICIPATE. THEY  
ARE UNABLE TO MEET THE COSTS INVOLVED,  
WITH RESULTANT LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

F. RE NEAR AND MID-TERM TRENDS FOR EXPEN-  
DITURES ON ARMS, JAMAICA'S FOREIGN EX-  
CHANGE CRISIS SUGGESTS THAT THERE  
WILL BE FAR FEWER PURCHASES

OVER THE NEXT DECADE THAN WILL BE  
DESIRED BY THE JDF (OR EVEN DESIRABLE  
FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW IF THE JDF IS  
TO CONTINUE TO PLAY CENTRAL ROLE IN  
THE PRESERVATION OF INTERNAL SECURITY).  
WE KNOW THAT THE JDF HOPES TO REPLACE  
ITS PRESENT STANDARD ARMS IN ORDER TO  
CONFORM TO CHARGES BY NATO MEMBERS.  
WE THINK THE JDF WILL BE HARD-PRESSED  
SIMPLY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE  
AND ACQUIRE NEEDED SPARES FOR EQUIPMENT  
ALREADY IN ITS INVENTORY.  
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